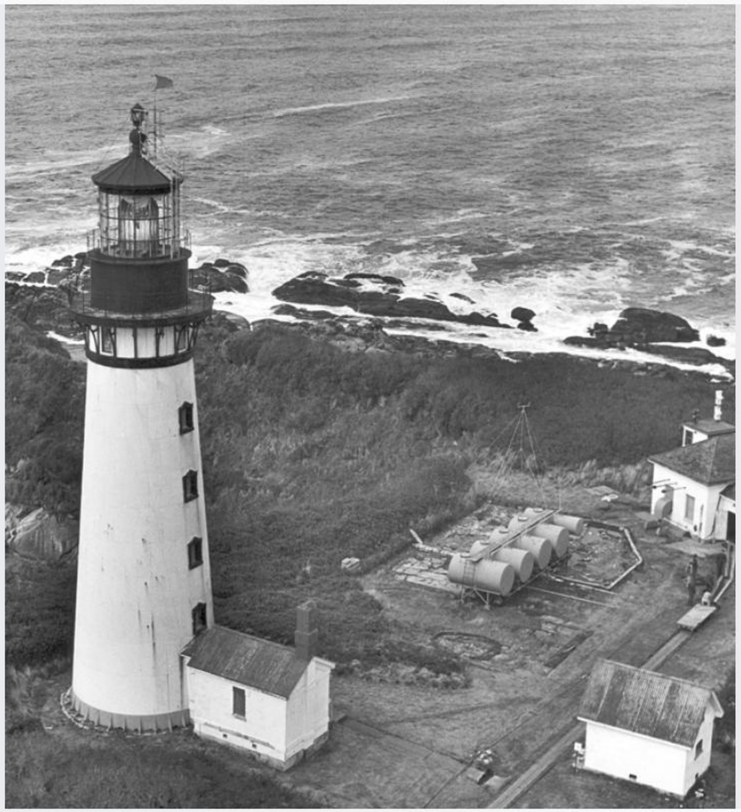
Destruction Island

Key Geographic Facts

- **Location:** 3.5 miles (5.6 km) off the coast of Jefferson County, Washington.
- **Size:** Approximately 30 to 37 acres (12 to 15 hectares).
- **Terrain:** A low, flat-topped island with steep, rocky cliffs that rise approximately 80 feet (24 m) above sea level.
- **Visibility:** The island is visible from the mainland, particularly from U.S. Route 101 near Ruby Beach.

A Factual History



- **1775:** Named "Isla de Dolores" (Island of Sorrows) by Spanish explorer Juan Francisco de la Bodega y Quadra after a shore party was killed by locals.
- **1787:** Captain Charles Barkley's crew had a similar fatal encounter. He named the nearby river "Destruction River."
- **Post-1787:** Cartographers later mistakenly transferred the name "Destruction" from the river (now the Hoh River) to the island itself.

Destruction Island Light

- **Established:** 1891. The light was first lit on January 1, 1892.
- **Tower:** A 94-foot (29 m) conical tower, constructed of brick and encased in a protective cast-iron shell.
- **Focal Plane:** The light was positioned 147 feet (45 m) above sea level.
- **Automation:** The station was automated by the U.S. Coast Guard in 1968.
- **Status:** The light was officially decommissioned and turned off in April 2008. The structure is no longer an active aid to navigation.

Protected Wildlife Sanctuary

Refuge Designation

The island is a key part of the Quillayute Needles National Wildlife Refuge, managed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Public Access Denied

The island is strictly closed to the public. A 200-yard buffer zone is enforced to prevent disturbance to wildlife.

Preservation Focus

The primary management goal is the preservation of natural habitat for the vast colonies of nesting seabirds and marine mammals.

Key Wildlife Species

- **Seabird Colonies:** It is a vital nesting site for thousands of seabirds. It hosts one of the largest Rhinoceros Auklet colonies on the coast, along with Cassin's Auklets and Brandt's Cormorants.
- **Gulls and Gulls:** The island supports very large breeding populations of Glaucous-winged Gulls and Pelagic Cormorants.
- **Marine Mammals:** The rocky shores serve as a primary haul-out (resting) site for large numbers of Harbor Seals and Steller Sea Lions.

Island Views

The steep, rocky cliffs and reefs surrounding the island.

A distant view from the mainland, showing its flat-topped profile.

The 94-foot lighthouse structure, which remains the island's key landmark.

Image Sources

https://coastview.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Destruction-Island-Web.jpg

Source: coastview.org

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https://www.lighthousefriends.com/Destruction_cgnw_1978.jpg

Source: www.lighthousefriends.com

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https://www.lighthousefriends.com/destruction2.jpg

Source: www.lighthousefriends.com

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https://coastview.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Destruction-Island-Web-1080x675.jpg

Source: coastview.org

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https://www.lighthousefriends.com/Destruction_cgnw.jpg

Source: www.lighthousefriends.com

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http://news.uslhs.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/destruction-island-wa-2004-courtesy-carl-gowler-4-cropped-lores.jpeg

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